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*Illustrated by*  
**HOWARD  
CHANDLER  
CHRISTY**

**AN OLD  
SWEETHEART  
OF MINE**

**JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY**

KF 2493















**An Old  
Sweetheart of Mine**







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# An Old Sweetheart of Mine

James Whitcomb Riley

Drawings by  
Howard Chandler Christy

Decorations by  
Virginia Keep

The Bobbs-Merrill Company  
Publishers                  Indianapolis

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**An Old  
Sweetheart of Mine**





APPENDIX

TO GEORGE C. HUNT

The beginning of whose reading I should say was  
marked by the first publication of these verses  
which now, expanded by words, devoted by  
publisher and master, is given to you, seems  
to be a warmer friend of the author's grateful  
and affectionate regard for his earliest friend



# List of Illustrations

- I** Frontispiece—An Old Sweetheart of Mine
- II** A fair, illusive vision that would vanish  
into air
- III** The *then* of changeless sunny days—the  
*now* of shower and shine
- IV** The old bookshelves and prints along the  
wall
- V** I find the smiling features of an old sweet-  
heart of mine
- VI** Its fate with my tobacco and to vanish  
with the smoke

# List of Illustrations

- VII When my truant fancies wander with that  
old sweetheart of mine
- VIII The voices of my children and the mother  
as she sings
- IX For I find an extra flavor in Memory's  
mellow wine
- X O childhood days enchanted! O the magic  
of the spring
- XI To—smile, behind my lesson, at that old  
sweetheart of mine
- XII A face of lily-beauty, with a form of airy  
grace

# List of Illustrations

- XIII When first I kissed her, and she answered  
the caress
- XIV I slipped the apple in it—and the teacher  
didn't know
- XV She gave me her *photograph*, and printed  
“Ever Thine”
- XVI And again I feel the pressure of her  
slender little hand
- XVII Where the vines were ever fruited, and  
the weather ever fine
- XVIII And she my faithful sweetheart till the  
golden hair was gray
- XIX The door is softly opened, and—my wife  
is standing there



*The ordered intermingling  
of the real and the dream,—  
The mill above the river,  
and the mist above the stream;  
The life of ceaseless labor,  
brave with song and cheery call—  
The radiant skies of evening,  
with its rainbow o'er us all.*





AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE!—Is this  
her presence here with me,  
Or but a vain creation of  
a lover's memory?

A fair, illusive vision  
that would vanish into air  
Dared I even touch the silence  
with the whisper of a prayer?



David Chandler Christy 1902.



Nay, let me then believe in all  
the blended false and true—  
The semblance of the *old* love  
and the substance of the *new*,—

The *then* of changeless sunny days—  
the *now* of shower and shine—  
But Love forever smiling,—  
as that old sweetheart of mine.







This ever-restful sense of *home*,  
    though shouts ring in the hall.—  
The easy-chair—the old bookshelves  
    and prints along the wall;

The rare *Habanas* in their box,  
or gaunt churchwarden-stem  
That often wags, above the jar,  
derisively at them.



—from "The Study" by E. J. Carr, 1904



As one who cons at evening  
o'er an album, all alone,  
And muses on the faces  
of the friends that he has known,

So I turn the leaves of Fancy,  
till, in shadowy design,  
I find the smiling features of  
an old sweetheart of mine.







The lamplight seems to glimmer  
with a flicker of surprise,  
As I turn it low—to rest me  
of the dazzle in my eyes,

And light my pipe in silence,  
    save a sigh that seems to yoke  
Its fate with my tobacco  
    and to vanish with the smoke.





'Tis a *fragrant* retrospection,—  
for the loving thoughts that start  
Into being are like perfume  
from the blossom of the heart;



Though I hear beneath my study,  
like a fluttering of wings,  
The voices of my children  
and the mother as she sings—



I feel no twinge of conscience  
to deny me any theme  
When Care has cast her anchor  
in the harbor of a dream—





The lamplight seems to glimmer  
with a flicker of surprise,  
As I turn it low—to rest me  
of the dazzle in my eyes,

III



—and Charles D. Smith—

For I find an extra flavor  
in Memory's mellow wine  
That makes me drink the deeper  
to that old sweetheart of mine.







O Childhood-days enchanted!  
O the magic of the Spring!—  
With all green boughs to blossom white,  
and all bluebirds to sing!



Though I hear beneath my study,  
like a fluttering of wings,  
The voices of my children  
and the mother as she sings—

I feel no twinge of conscience  
to deny me any theme  
When Care has cast her anchor  
in the harbor of a dream—





In fact, to speak in earnest,  
I believe it adds a charm  
To spice the good a trifle  
with a little dust of harm,—

.







And I thrill beneath the glances  
of a pair of azure eyes  
As glowing as the summer  
and as tender as the skies.





I can see the pink sunbonnet  
and the little, checkered dress  
She wore when first I kissed her  
and she answered the caress

With the written declaration that,  
    “As surely as the vine  
Grew 'round the stump,” she loved me—  
    that old sweetheart of mine.







Again I make her presents,  
in a really helpless way,—  
The big “Rhode Island Greening”—  
(I was hungry too, that day!)—

But I follow her from Spelling,  
with her hand behind her—so—  
And I slip the apple in it—  
and the Teacher doesn't know!



Edward Charles Lewis

1892



I give my *treasures* to her—all,—  
my pencil—blue-and-red;—  
And, if little girls played marbles,  
*mine* should all be *hers*, instead!—

But *she* gave me her *photograph*,  
and printed "Ever Thine"  
Across the back—in blue-and-red—  
that old sweetheart of mine!









When I should be a poet,  
    and with nothing else to do  
But write the tender verses  
    that she set the music to....





When we should live together  
in a cozy little cot  
Hid in a nest of roses,  
with a fairy garden-spot,

Where the vines were ever fruited  
and the weather ever fine,  
And the birds were ever singing  
for that old sweetheart of mine....







When I should be her lover  
    forever and a day,  
And she my faithful sweetheart  
    till the golden hair was gray;

And we should be so happy  
that when either's lips were dumb  
They would not smile in Heaven  
till the other's kiss had come.





But, ah! my dream is broken  
by a step upon the stair,  
And the door is softly opened,  
and—my wife is standing there:

Yet with eagerness and rapture  
all my visions I resign,—  
To greet the *living* presence  
of that old sweetheart of mine



—JAMES C. MURPHY & CO. N.Y.



Where the vines were ever fruited  
and the weather ever fine,  
And the birds were ever singing  
for that old sweetheart of mine....

















